



Town of Garner
PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENT-01

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Notice on Increased Coyote Sightings in Area

There has been an increased number of coyote sightings in the Garner area recently. These highly adaptive animals are present in all 100 counties in North Carolina and have expanded into urban and suburban areas. Coyotes are shy and generally afraid of humans, and it is extremely rare for them to approach humans. Nevertheless, pets should be leashed or kept close and monitored at all times. Pets in Town of Garner parks must be leashed at all times.

The Town of Garner has compiled an FAQ sheet about living with coyotes based on information from the North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission and other sources (see below).

For more information on coyotes (including hunting and trapping regulations), contact the North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission at (919) 707-0010, or visit the agency's website at ncwildlife.org.

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Living with Coyotes

Due to an increase in sightings of coyotes in the area, the Town of Garner has put together a list of frequently asked questions to help inform the public about this species and how to coexist with them. This list has been compiled from information provided by the North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission, USDA Wildlife Services and The Humane Society of the United States.

Q: What are coyotes?

A: The coyote is one of the most widespread canine species in North America. They are incredibly adaptive, which has led to an expansion into urban and suburban areas. In fact, coyotes have been seen in all 100 counties in North Carolina. Obviously, this leads to some friction between coyotes and humans attempting to live in the same areas.

Q: What does a coyote look like?

A: They look very similar to their close relative the gray wolf but are smaller. They have a thinner frame, face and muzzle and longer ears. They typically carry their tails downward when running or walking, unlike wolves, which carry their tails horizontally. They weigh anywhere between 20 and 45 pounds. Coyote fur color varies geographically. The predominant color is light gray and red, interspersed with black and white.



Q: Should I be afraid of coyotes?

A: Coyotes are shy and elusive creatures and are generally afraid of people. It is very rare for them to attack humans. Coyotes are very social animals; it is not uncommon to see nuclear families (or even loosely-knit packs of unrelated individuals) together. If a pack is seen together, it is likely for social reasons and not to hunt, as coyotes are typically solitary hunters. While you probably do not need to be afraid of coyotes, it is important to remember they are wild animals and to keep your distance.

Hearing howling can be an unnerving sound, but that is the way coyotes communicate with each other. Howls are used to greet each other, to warn either other about threats, to indicate when females are ready to mate and more. Coyotes are most frequently heard during mating season (January-March) and when juveniles leave their families (September-November).

Q: What should I do if I see a coyote?

A: Again, coyotes are generally afraid of people, but we want to make sure they remain conditioned to avoid encounters with humans. That means disturbing/annoying them to discourage them from staying in a particular area. Here are some suggestions:

- Make noise (with your voice or an air horn, for example).
- Make yourself look scary. Use body language that seems aggressive, like waving your arms. Sudden movements are also effective.
- Use flashing lights to distract them.
- Throw something toward them. (Unless you are actually in danger, please do not throw something at a coyote.) Tossing a rock or stick or even a tennis ball nearby should be enough to scare it away.
- If you have access to one, a hose or squirt gun can also work.

Q: I saw a coyote during the day. Does that mean it has rabies?

A: Coyotes are a rabies-vector species, which means they can carry the rabies virus (often without showing any of the typical symptoms). However, it is not unusual to see them in search of food during daylight hours, especially near sunrise and sunset.

Q: What else should I know about coyotes?

A: There are several tips to help keep you (and your pets) safe when coyotes are nearby.

- Do not allow your pets to roam. Keep them on a leash when walking. (This is a Town of Garner ordinance anyway.)
- Do not leave food outside where coyotes can access it. Keep trash cans clean and secured. Coyotes are very smart and will return to places they know provide sources of food.
- If going into an area that may be inhabited by coyotes, do not go alone.
- Never feed coyotes. This makes them less afraid of humans.
- Never approach a pack of coyotes. Do not stare at them or act threatening. This may cause them to get defensive, which can lead to injury. Coyotes sometimes form packs during the fall and winter for more effective hunting, especially when hunting larger prey like deer.
- If you see a coyote that is obviously unafraid of humans, be aggressive. This is called hazing and is meant to make coyotes afraid of humans again. Use the tips mentioned in the "What should I do if I see a coyote?" Do not attempt hazing if the coyote is accompanied by pups or appears to be sick or injured. Instead, call the North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission at 919.707.0010. Because coyotes are a rabies-vector species, it is illegal in North Carolina for them to be relocated. They are instead euthanized.

For more information on coyotes (including hunting and trapping regulations), contact the North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission at 919.707.0010, or visit the agency's website at www.ncwildlife.org.